**North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative**

**Steering Committee Meeting**

**April 18, 2012 Charleston, West Virginia**

**Meeting Minutes**

Meeting web page with links: <http://www.northatlanticlcc.org/meetings_04182012.html>

**Action Items**

LCC Coordinator Andrew Milliken to work with partners to set up a work group focused on connecting LCC science with local planners including linking to the American Institute of Certified Planners. Steering Committee members will identify staff to assist with this effort.

Keys to success discussed by Deputy Secretary David Hayes at the National LCC meeting in Denver will be distributed to the Steering Committee.

LCC staff and partners will consider organizing a LCC Session at the next NEAFWA meeting to show completed and ongoing projects.

LCC Science Coordinator to email technical sub team members who are not full committee members to assess their availability and interest in full membership on the technical committee or in continuing on an as needed basis.

LCC Coordinator to work with WMI to post all LCC project quarterly reports on the LCC website and notify LCC partners when they are posted.

LCC Coordinator Andrew Milliken agreed to provide information on three workshops to review progress on Designing Sustainable Landscapes project and provide input on the next phase.

The Request for Proposals for selected science needs will be distributed to Steering Committee members for further distribution.

Demonstration projects team to work with three project applicants to develop full proposals using similar format to science proposals and submit them to the Steering Committee for review prior to the next Steering Committee call.

Ken Elowe will solicit volunteers for a conservation targets subcommittee. He also will provide the Steering Committee a table of terrestrial representative species already identified, along with the species and habitats they represent.

BJ Richardson (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Michael Terner (Applied Geographics) will work with LCC partners on the Information Management Needs assessment interviews and survey and report back in the results on the August Steering Committee call.

**Meeting Highlights**

A total of 43 members and partners were present at the meeting either in person or on the phone, constituting a quorum.

An update on the State of the LCC was provided with significant discussion on engaging additional partners that we have not yet engaged including community planners and showing partners and Congress the tools we are developing and how they can be used. A new workgroup will be developed to focus on working with community planners.

The technical committee and three sub teams (aquatic, terrestrial and coastal) reported on their process and results including the identification of priority science needs. There was significant discussion on ensuring adequate representation on the technical teams of the taxonomic, geographic and jurisdictional diversity in the LCC and agreement on inviting additional members who are now ad hoc to participate in the full technical committee.

An update was provided on the Northeast Climate Science Center including progress on selection of a full time director, and the status of their Request for Proposals (RFP). A total of 48 proposals were received addressing six focus areas. It was noted that the Northeastern and Midwestern LCCs worked together to identify focus areas for the RFP.

A presentation was provided on the Designing Sustainable Landscapes Project followed by a discussion on the use of representative species, the use of the project tools to identify priority areas along with existing tools and how to engage partners in the testing, refinement and use of these tools across the region in the next phase. A second phase of the project was recommended by the technical committee.

The technical committee ranked list of science needs recommendations was presented. The five highest priorities that could be funded with FY 2012 LCC appropriated funds included: 1) Phase II of Designing Sustainable Landscapes, 2) a synthesis of coastal and aquatic fish habitat information in the LCC, 3) improved coastal habitat mapping, 4) development of consistent terrestrial and aquatic habitat classification and mapping in the Canadian portion of the LCC, and 5) developing and testing coastal wetland restoration methodologies that account for climate change adaptation. The Steering Committee passed a motion to support these five science needs for project development. There was significant discussion on limiting the number of projects to maintain sufficient oversight.

The demonstration projects team proposed three projects to demonstrate the application of LCC science to conservation delivery at three scales: local, landscape and LCC. They described a process for selecting demonstration projects that would parallel the science needs process. The Steering Committee passed a motion supporting the three proposed projects in concept but asked for full proposals to be submitted at the next meeting.

The Steering Committee discussed the potential role of the LCC in helping to implement the National Fish, Wildlife and Plant Adaptation Strategy and Wildlife Habitat System for the Nation. They agreed to track the progress of these initiatives and seek opportunities to work on common goals and avoid duplication.

The Steering Committee discussed the identification of conservation targets including population goals for representative species. There was concern by some members about using species population goals and an understanding that multiple approaches to conservation targets based on species, habitats and systems may be needed to represent the different approaches of the conservation agencies and organizations represented on the LCC. The Steering Committee approved a motion to create a conservation targets subcommittee.

A presentation on the LCC Information Management Needs Assessment was made by the contractor. The Steering Committee was asked to help ensure participation in interviews and an online survey. The results will be presented at the next meeting.

The next in-person meeting was set for the day before the Northeast Directors meeting in the Catskills area of New York, probably on October 31. A call will be scheduled for August.

**Introductions**

Ken Elowe (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) welcomed all and introduced Paul Johansen (West Virginia Department of Natural Resources), the Vice Chair of the Appalachian LCC. Paul noted that he appreciates the opportunity to host the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference and the North Atlantic LCC steering committee meeting. He noted how important the collaboration between LCCs is and how the North Atlantic and Appalachian are doing very well in that area. Wendi Weber (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) thanked everyone for taking time out of their schedules to be here and for being a part of this important conservation partnership. She noted that the North Atlantic LCC is a national leader and how at the National LCC meeting in Denver there was a lot of talk about what was happening here in the Northeast.

Ken conducted a roll call- there were 43 partners and members present either in person or on the phone constituting a quorum (see attendance table at the end of the notes).

**Approval of minutes**

Ken reviewed the agenda and asked for an approval of the minutes from the last call. Becky Gwynn (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries) moved to accept the minutes and Patricia Riexinger (New York Department of Environmental Conservation) seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved without further discussion.

**Action items**

Andrew Milliken (North Atlantic LCC) reviewed the action items and actions taken from the last meeting including the following items:

* Discussion about the National Fish, Wildlife and Plant Climate Change Strategy that is relevant to the LCC will happen later on today. Handout 13 was created to supplement the discussion;
* Scott Schwenk (North Atlantic LCC) provided an updated list of Technical Committee and Subcommittee team members requested on the last call (handout 6);
* A link was provided for partners to tune in and listen to the Designing Sustainable Landscapes Seminar and there were 120 people that tuned in;
* The Technical Committee provided a list of top science needs for the Steering Committee (handout 12b) that will be discussed later in the day;
* Steve Fuller (North Atlantic LCC) held a conservation design team meeting April 17th at NEAFWA with about 20 partners in attendance;
* Dee Blanton (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Andrew hosted a meeting on March 19-20 in Baltimore on State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) updates (handout 11);
* Ken forwarded the LCC boundary proposal to the other two affected LCCs, the Upper Midwest Great Lakes and Appalachian. The proposal is up for consideration in their steering committees;
* The new LCC logos have been printed on both the Annual Report and the Executive Summary as well as most other LCC documents along with partner logos on longer documents.

Additional Actions items leftover from the November 2 meeting include:

* Canadian partners have been contacted about creating a consistent data layers and that will be discussed later in the meeting;
* The launch of the information needs assessment will happen today and Michael Terner (Applied Geographics) is present to give more information and answer questions;
* The Climate Science Center coordinated with the four LCCs in the Northeast and put together four priority science need categories for pre-proposals. This will be discussed later on as well;
* The technical committee worked with Emily Greene (Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership - ACFHP) after her presentation at the November meeting to incorporate ACFHP’s needs into recommended priority science need for the LCC.

**Review of the State of the LCC**

Link to presentation: [State of the LCC](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/State_of_the_NA_LCC_4-18-12v2.pptx)

Andrew briefed the group about the status of the LCC what the next steps are noting that most of the information he’ll be presenting is in the LCC [executive summary and the annual report](http://www.northatlanticlcc.org/annual_report2011/index.html).

Summary of presented information

* vision, mission and components approved
* partnership development and operational capacity
  + structure and governance approved
  + steering committee with 31 members well represented at all meetings
  + technical committee and sub teams established
  + demonstration projects team established
  + dedicated staff hired
  + additional staff providing partial support to the LCC from the Fish and Wildlife Service and partner organizations
  + developed administrative agreement with Wildlife Management Institute
* science needs and projects
  + completed request for and prioritization of science needs
  + organized and hosted Northeast Conservation Framework Workshop
  + completed and approved LCC Conservation Science Strategic Plan
  + selected foundational projects for 2010 and 2011
* communications & information management
  + developed interim LCC website and began design of content management site
  + organized five webinars on LCC projects
  + developed numerous fact sheets
  + conducted Congressional visits and developed outreach materials
  + developed information management team

Priorities for next steps for 2012

* partnership development and operations
  + enhance coordination with Provinces & other Canadian Partners, Tribes, delivery partners (e.g. NRCS)
  + develop additional operational capacity for conservation design, translation and adoption including GIS support
* science needs and projects
  + provide clear communications on annual process
  + develop technical sub teams by system and involve additional partners
  + increase coordination with neighboring LCCs & LCC national network
  + coordinate closely with Northeast Climate Science Center Science project implementation
  + develop oversight committees to guide projects
  + continue science seminars and opportunities for feedback
  + develop manager/user groups for decision support tool projects , conduct pilot area workshops for Designing Sustainable Landscapes
* Conservation Design, Translation, Adoption
  + increase internal and external GIS capacity
  + implement Landscape Conservation Design & regional information for SWAPS
  + develop process for conservation targets
  + implement demonstration projects to apply and evaluate science and tools and demonstrate success

Patty Riexinger noted that as the LCC is maturing quickly there is an increased need for communications and coordination. One possibility is a training session at NEAFWA where the products that come out of the LCC are showcased.

Ken pointed out that the synopsis sets the stage for a lot of what is on the agenda. Looking at list of science that has been produced doesn’t automatically translate to science on the ground. It is important to continue to emphasize the translation of science. LCC projects need to be relevant and useful, not just new science.

Phil Huffman (The Nature Conservancy) noted the importance of not only engaging government agencies in Canada but also reaching out to Canadian NGOs. Zoe Smith (Wildlife Conservation for Society) mentioned that there is another group working on this same effort that the LCC may be able to connect with and that is Two Countries One Forest. This group works with the forest on the U.S.-Canada border and they are also struggling with how to apply the science that they’ve produced.

Steve Walker (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife) talked about another group- American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Their president is very interested in what the LCC is doing and he strongly recommended tightening that connection. Andrew agreed this is very critical because landscape conservation needs to influence land use. He agreed to work with Steve to set that up.

Bernie Marczyk (Ducks Unlimited) asked if there are any plans for congressional outreach. Ken answered that visits were conducted last year but more are needed. Congress wants the LCC to be relevant; they want to see products and outcomes that will be useful. Congressional staff were encouraged to hear what the LCC was doing when Ken, Andrew and Jad Daley (Trust for Public Land) visited in August. Wendi Weber added that they don’t want to see redundancy so it’s important to show how the LCC complements other efforts. It’s also important to hear from the partners not just the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ken pointed out that Cathy Sparks (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management) talked to her Senate office, as did partners in Vermont. Patty suggested going to Congress and saying “The LCC has produced these tools and this is how they’ve been used.”

Jad Daley (Trust for Public Land) mentioned that the Denver (National LCC) meeting was really a turning point; it created a critical momentum swing for the LCCs. Jad said that there were powerful non-profit groups in attendance that were swayed solely by that meeting. There was a presentation about how LCC science is already being used on the ground. Every one of those examples becomes hugely important when it comes to how the LCC is viewed by Congress. The LCC has support now, but needs to work to keep it.

Ken thanked everyone for their comments and said that setting realistic and ambitious expectations is definitely part of that. He also thanked everyone for their enthusiasm, passion and conviction that are making this happen.

Jeff Horan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) pointed out that it's clear that shared capacity and relying on each other to understand what each one can add is very important.

Dave Day (Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission) said that there is a lot going on in the North Atlantic LCC but one important thing from the state prospective is the work being undertaken by the aquatic work group and the effort to develop a regional stream temperature monitoring network. States by themselves wouldn’t do this but because it's on a regional scale it will have practical benefits for the states. Ken thanked Dave for that point and said how it brings up the critical point of LCCs working together as exemplified by Pennsylvania since it is located within three LCCs. Common science needs need to rise to the top of the lists of science needs from the Appalachian, the North Atlantic and the Upper Midwest Great Lakes.

Patty Riexinger asked if there are any cross-LCC initiatives in place. Ken answered that there are LCC staff working on this issue nationally and that the idea of an LCC within a geography has to include how one LCC complement the other LCC's capacities without being redundant.

George Gay (National Wildlife Federation) added on to Jad's point that the national LCC conference was very important in the building of the momentum for the LCC. DOI Deputy Secretary David Hayes (keynote speaker) said he thought there were 5 keys to LCC success: 1. share science, 2. be relevant, 3. be sure to translate science to the ground, 4. don’t do too much, and 5. document success and make sure all players around the table have some skin in the game (keep them involved in a meaningful way). Four of the five relate to getting the LCCs work out to as broad as possible an audience. When the governance document was being drafted for this group, there were three layers that the LCC wanted to have included and those are the Steering Committee, the group of people not on the Steering Committee but involved with the LCC, and stakeholders that are loosely but intentionally connected to the LCC. George said that in order to meet all of these keys mentioned by Deputy Secretary Hayes, the LCC needs to figure out how to better reach that third level of players. Ken thanked George for bringing those points up as they struck home for him too. Patty Riexinger said it would be nice to have the keys to success in writing and Ken agreed to provide that to the group.

Phil Huffman said that the key is around delivery to the audience and he knows that The Nature Conservancy has lots people on the ground trying to do good work, that are aware of the LCC but there is a lot more that needs to be done to get a clear understanding of what the new information is. Phil said he really liked Patty's idea of having a training session at NEAFWA next year since there is already a captive audience. In terms of partners and going forward the LCC should try to engage the folks in the transportation community in a strategic way because of its effects on ecosystems.

Ken thanked for Phil for bringing up great points. Ken directed the group to the LCC annual report as well as the executive summary where they can find the conservation framework from Albany that really gets at what the last few comments talked about; connecting with communities. The LCC has asked what the next steps should be and one answer has really come out loud and clear that this group needs to work on connecting with community planners. Andrew said that he is interested in working on this issue but would like to have some help. He asked for volunteers to help work with the planning community. Patty Riexinger volunteered one of her staff that has experience working on this. This is an issue that has to be taken to communities, this group needs to go out and really talk to people and embed it in their culture. Ellen Mecray (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) offered up a few of her interns that are working on local level things as well as a few people that are working on coastal services. Scot Williamson (Wildlife Management Institute) pointed out that this is a great opportunity to use the products from a RCN grant that produced model guidelines for planning boards, the product is there but it has not had much use. Cathy Sparks also offered up some help saying a lot of the planners in Rhode Island have solid ideas of what they want but they look to Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies for deliverables, things like maps and guidance. They seem to be willing and eager to help and to adopt some of these principles if it can be crafted in such a way that it is substantiated, reasonable and defensible. Ken thanked everyone for their great discussion on this topic and said he doesn't want to cut it off but there are a few presentations that will set the stage for rest of the day and give the group information on some of the tools and products they've been wondering about.

**Report from LCC Technical Committee**

Scott Schwenk (North Atlantic LCC) gave an update on the technical committee. Everything they have been working on has been leading up to this meeting including refining the science needs for the coming year. Several new members have been added to the technical committee to fill in some gaps and add expertise and knowledge. The first in person meeting of the technical committee was held in Northampton, Massachusetts on March 14th and 15th and at this meeting, the most important science needs for the LCC were decided on by the three sub groups (aquatic, terrestrial and coastal). Scott thanked all the participants for all their hard work and said there was a really great synergy between them all. In looking to the future, the group will try and get started earlier so that there is more time to properly flesh out all priority needs and get more expert input. The group will also focus on communication and coordination with neighboring LCCs and climate science centers (CSCs). Scott then asked for any questions that people might have. Bill Hyatt (Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection) asked if Scott feels there are any gaps in expertise within the subgroups that need to be addressed. Scott answered that on the terrestrial side, some folks from the U.S. Forest Service or other forest expertise groups would be helpful. Andrew added that the coastal group is pretty well represented for coastal systems but not marine. If there is a desire to get into the offshore marine issues, the group does not have full representation. However, in thinking about one of the five keys of success that were mentioned earlier in not doing too much, perhaps the technical committee doesn't need to get into offshore marine issues at this time. Ellen Mecray pointed out that if there are gaps within this group they need to be filled with state coastal zone management representatives, not fish and wildlife agency staff. Ellen also suggested pulling in some of the coastal NGOs that aren't represented in the sub groups (although she noted that Adam Whelchel represented The Nature Conservancy on this group). She asked about the status of subteam members such as Adam that were not officially on the technical committee. Andrew agreed – the technical committee pulled in quite a few extra people for help this year and they never really discussed if they're now members or not. In his opinion, if these people are willing and able, then they are welcome to join the technical committee.

Patty Riexinger pointed out that there is a real dearth of state representatives and says she's concerned with state representation and being able to figure out what the states needs are. She wondered if there is enough geographic span within the group to cover all the habitat types included within the LCC. She is also concerned that freshwater wetlands often fall through the cracks and EPA is listed as members, so that may be something they could address. Scott answered that Anne Kuhn (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) helped us invite some EPA folks that just didn’t have the time to get to the meeting. Andrew noted that additional state representation is welcome but that we don’t want to ask too much. Andrew pointed out that the LCC has a good working relationship with the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee and we need to ensure that there is ongoing communication with that group. Bill echoed Patty's point saying that he sees nothing wrong with the leadership of the technical committee reaching out to the states on an ephemeral basis but that it can be a little imposing to have such a large technical committee. Rather than have a large permanent roster, just add people as needed to fill that gap.

Gwen Brewer (Maryland Department of Natural Resources) pointed out that a continuing challenge for the LCC is to address plants in addition to animals. This group keeps talking about habitats but plant communities and some of the issues for some botanical resources are a little bit different than they are for animals and she wondered how well this was represented on the different technical committees. Andrew answered that it is definitely a gap although NatureServe provides input. He has met with the New England Wildflower Society – they are not just a horticulture group, they're a conservation organization focused on native plants and they want to become part of the LCC in some way or another. That would cover New England regionally and he said he wasn't sure if there are similar organizations in the mid-Atlantic or New York. Maybe the starting point is to start working with New England Wildflower and take it from there. Gwen said another source is the state Natural Heritage Programs.

Andrew brought up the still open question of whether or not partners that assisted with the three technical sub teams should become official technical committee members. Ken asked the group if there is any objection to allowing those people with inclination, expertise and desire to join the technical committee. Bill Hyatt said that his inclination is to do it loosely, more on an as needed basis. If they want to stay, so be it. Ken agrees but wants to make sure that the whole group agrees. Ken also said that when the steering committee is considering something like this, it is important to keep in mind Patty's comments from earlier- to make sure the expertise represents the full suite of needs. It's important to know who is one these technical committees and to trust that the recommendations that come from them have a solid foundation.

Karen said that she also agrees with the flexibility to bring people in and out but that she is concerned with keeping a core group of people that make sure things get followed through with, that states and partners are represented in decisions that ultimately go forth to the steering committee. Andrew said the core group did vote on recommendations. The steering committee could certainly ask all those who participated to become members, otherwise it would be as Bill indicated and treat them as advisors and pull them in when they're needed. That way they could tie in with the Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee and states are represented. Andrew asked if this seemed like a reasonable way forward. Ken pointed out that part of the solution to Karen's issue is not just committee membership but what Andrew and Scott will do to ensure the linkages. Ken said he looks to them to make sure they're reaching out to the diversity technical committee and states and fact check where necessary; to make sure what the technical committee is coming up with is reasonable to bring forward to this steering committee. Steve Fuller said that in the same way that representation is needed for the states in these committees, each of the different programs within the Fish and Wildlife Service that have authority for a group of wildlife (fisheries, endangered species, migratory birds, etc) needs representation too. Ken agreed saying that he'll look to Scott and Andrew for that as well and that when they bring something to this committee it is assumed there is full representation from whoever needs to have had input into it. Scott will follow up with the sub team members to assess their availability and interest in full membership on the technical committee or in an as needed basis.

**Review of Approved Annual Process for Science Needs and Projects and Budgets**

Andrew moved on to the next agenda item which is a review of the science needs process and budget status. The Steering Committee needs to decide what needs to support from the list developed by the technical committee and whether or not to fund the second phase of the *Designing Sustainable Landscapes* project.

Scot Williamson provided an overview of the LCC finances (Link to [Budget presentation](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/NALCC%20SPRING%202012%20BUDGET%20REPORT.pdf)) . He will be providing regular updates to the Steering Committee.

There are five agreements that have been put in place for the past three fiscal years and these are the agreements that are used to fund either contract personnel at the LCC or the specific projects themselves. Quarterly reports are just beginning to come in from some of the earliest grants. Every quarter, grant recipients are reminded to report on their progress, as established in the contracts they sign. These are sent to Andrew for review and once they’ve been viewed and approved, they get their invoices paid. It gives this board a really good sense of accountability for these funds and hopefully lots of transparency. Becky Gwynn (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries) asked when the reports are being circulated for technical review, when does this body see any information coming from these? Ken answered that what the steering committee sees is up to them. Andrew pointed out that a simple answer would be to post all quarterly reports on the website. Scot added that WMI asks the grant recipients to produce quarterly abstracts so that the progress can be reviewed within a paragraph or two. Ken agreed that posting these reports will add a level of transparency to this group that he hopes will be very helpful.

**Update from Northeast Climate Science Center**

Pete Murdoch (U.S. Geological Survey) provided an update of behalf of Rachel Muir (U.S. Geological Survey) and noted that Rick Bennett (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) has actively involved and could answer questions. Currently, the interim director is Rachel and the announcement for a full time director was posted and has closed so the person that was selected should be announced soon. The FY12 cooperative agreement money has been turned over to the university consortium - that money is being used to develop a program and do whatever is needed to get the center itself set up. An RFP has been distributed with $530,000 available. As Rick said earlier in the meeting, they have 48 pre-proposals that are all in now so they are available for review. The plan is to have full proposals and decisions on them by May 7th. There are several focus areas but full proposals are expected at least in these three topical areas: evaluating existing methods of habitat classification; ecological flow and sea level rise. There are already several meetings planned for stakeholders and partners. Near term tasks include drafting a science plan with a lot of partner involvement, design of an advisory council, and continuing outreach to partners in all landscapes including human-dominated landscapes, in order to make the Climate Science Centers a success. Karen Bennett was wondering about the focus areas in the RFP and asked Pete to elaborate on the first one. Rick Bennett (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) answered that the first four out of six came directly from working with LCC coordinators. These are foundational issues that they thought would be good for a first round while there is only an interim director. Scott Schwenk added that a meeting was held with LCC coordinators and here in the Northeast there is a really good terrestrial habitat map that came from the RCN process so the idea is to really synchronize across the broader region. Ken says that this was a really good example of cross LCC synergy; Andrew, Scott and Rick were able to work well with Jean Brennan (Appalachian LCC) as well as with the Upper Midwest Great Lakes LCC and Eastern Tall Grass Prairie LCC. The more that LCCs can consolidate their needs and common asks, the better. Phil Huffman asked what the time frame for pre-proposals is. Rick answered that May 7th is the date that full proposals are supposed to be selected. The call will be going out soon for those. With 48 pre-proposals and only $530,000, discussions with Rachel and Rick Palmer (the lead for the UMass consortium) have led to all them not wanting to waste people's time so they're trying to consolidate to six or seven quality proposals. The proposals that don't get funded may become relevant to the LCC. Jean added that not only is LCC to LCC coordination important, but LCC to CSC coordination is equally as important.

**Presentation of Phase I Progress and Consideration of Phase II Funding for *Designing Sustainable Landscapes* Project**

Link to presentation: [Powerpoint](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/Designing_sustainable_landscapes_4-18-2012.pptx)

Andrew summarized the key elements, approaches and outcomes of the first phase of this project. He related this project back to part of the LCC mission to develop decision support tools to guide conservation decisions in the face of change.

He noted that outcomes from this project should be complementary to other ongoing projects as well as existing information that is being compiled and synthesized for the conservation design translation and adoption project approved by the Steering Committee in January.

Patty Riexinger said that the written project proposal was very difficult and hard to understand, but hearing it explained and being able to see pictures makes it much more engaging. She asked if there are affiliated species that go with this project, for example, what is the Blackburnian warbler representative of? It would be helpful for those people that bring this back to their managers to know what species are representing and what entourage of other species that comes with Blackburnian warbler. Andrew said that that is a great question and that basically, representative species represent other species using similar habitats. For example the Blackburnian uses blocks of relatively undisturbed, mixed hardwood and conifer, interior forest and so it represents species that use that same type of habitat. He offered to provide lists of the species and habitats associated with the representative species. Andrew reviewed the process that was used to select the initial representative species. Scot Williamson echoed Patty saying that he didn't really understand this project until Andrew presented it but now understands it as an important way to identify priority areas by actually looking at potential risk rather than a static snapshot of existing conditions. Andrew agreed and noted that this approach needs to be part of a larger tool kit that can be used along with expert input bringing new focus to how landscapes are changing and additional resolution to some of the focus areas that are already in place. Wayne MacCallum (Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife) noted that this approach gets at the notion of adaptation both historically and looking to the future. Do we concentrate on the core areas identified or do we continue to focus some of our efforts to sustain distribution over broader areas? Andrew noted that many of the representative species are birds that can easily migrate to new areas. More thought needs to be placed on species that can't move that easily. One approach may be similar to BioMap2 in Masschusetts where there are the core areas and supporting natural landscapes that might require different levels of protection – acquisition in the core areas and best management practices and land use practices in the supporting areas. This question leads back to one of the topics discussed earlier that this group really needs to involve town and city planners. Mike Rasser (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management) discussed the need to address species that have part of their life history in other countries. Andrew said that what this group is striving for is habitat needed to support fish and wildlife at certain levels for the part of their life history that occurs within this LCC. Mike asked if this project incorporates existing bird data. Andrew answered that these habitat suitability models use the occurrence of species and their relationship to habitat, they're not occupancy or persistence models at this point. Zoe Smith asked Andrew what level of engagement this will get to with stakeholders – how far down “on the ground” will this go? Andrew answered that it's easier to think about it in terms of the three pilot areas, the technical committee brought together the key conservation partners they typically work with, but they should be bringing in some local planners and other stakeholders and Andrew has talked to a few people about reaching beyond the traditional conservation community in the three pilot areas and based on what is learned there, to think about how to fully implement this approach across the entire Northeast region. Jeff Horan voiced his support for this project but had a question about timing - knowing that there are a lot of variable and scenarios that can be run, does the steering committee have to make decisions early on in the process about what scenarios will be run in? Andrew answered that this group and manager and user groups in the pilot areas should identify a broad range of scenarios and try to anticipate what will be needed and if something is missed, it won't be a big deal to go back and add it but running some of these scenarios across the region is not a trivial exercise so trying to anticipate as much ahead of time as possible is best. Steve Fuller added as a follow-up to Zoe’s comments that both the conservation design project and the state wildlife action plans are region-wide pilots that could use outcomes from Designing Sustainable Landscapes. Andrew agreed to provide information on three workshops to review progress on this project and provide input on the next phase.

Scott Schwenk gave a brief description of the technical committee input on phase II of the Designing Sustainable Landscapes project. The technical committee reviewed the phase II proposal now because phase I is ending and a decision about phase II needed to be made quickly. It meets many of the LCC's science needs including predicting climate change effects and urban growth and how that will affect future capacity of the landscape. One particularly important need this project addresses is assessing future capacity of the landscape by looking at climate change and urban growth and that really gets at the heart of what this LCC is trying to do which is look at these important future changes. The reason this is important is because the LCC needs to adapt what they're doing now from a conservation standpoint to take into account the ways things will be changing in the future. The second critical need this project addresses is creating decision support tools to adapt to these future changes. There are six main additions to the project in Phase II and the biggest one is to extend the scope to the entire Northeast Region because there are so many projects and partnerships that are working at that level. A number of important spatial tools, data and summaries for ecological settings across that wide geographic range would come out of that. The second addition is to create a climate and habitat suitability model for another set of 20 representative species. Those species have not been decided yet and the project team is very to open to what ones will be included. The goal is to get at least two or three representative species for each major habitat matrix and at least one for the more minor, but important, matrix habitats. The third component is the landscape design and decision support tools that Andrew talked about earlier. The fourth component is improvement of the succession and disturbance models. The fifth component is to incorporate sea level rise into the model which is a fairly large undertaking but has come up as a very important science need. The plan would be to collaborate with U.S.G.S Woods Hole Science Center and/or Columbia University to incorporate models that others have already developed. Lastly, they plan to update their ecological integrity model to include regional connectivity.

The technical committee really spent a good deal of time thinking about this project and identified issues that need to be addressed. The first issue that came up is that the LCC needs to be engaged as a partnership all throughout this project because this isn't a project where the PI's can't be sent along and come back in a year or two with a finished product. The LCC needs to make sure the products that come out of this are useful and used by conservation decision makers and land use planners. The second area that was discussed was that all the project outputs: the data layers, the spatial models, etc are transparent and freely available so that people can understand what's behind this and in the future, if possible could be modified so they could be transferred to other regions. The first, part of that, is addressed by the fact that that they are operating on an open source platform- all of the models, their coding, everything is available to anyone who wants it. The second part of that is much more difficult because it's full scale climate modeling for a couple of decades and that's not something that can be run on a laptop or even on a couple computers, it takes a cluster of computers to really do this. Those were the big issues that were discussed and resolved by the technical committee and in the end after a vote by the subcommittees, this project came out as a top need/project.

Wendi Weber asked how this climate modeling, as proposed in phases I and II, complements various climate centers, not only USGS but other agencies and partnerships. Andrew answered that in phase I, UMass did their own down-scaled climate modeling because it didn’t exist in the Northeast Region at the scale needed. For phase II, it will likely be done in conjunction with the climate science centers (CSCs), not just for the North Atlantic but for the Northeast region. For the sea level rise modeling, the DSL team is really counting on the CSCs to take a lead role. What the UMass/LCC team is hoping to do is take the data from the CSCs sea level rise modeling and plug it into the LCC conservation framework. This project is an example of how this collaboration should work with the CSCs providing detailed climate and related modeling and the LCC linking to decision makers and assessing the impacts are on species, habitats and management decisions. Jean Brennan said she supports this tool but has one question when looking at it as a model, or as a decision support tool and that is under phase II will the integration of already established data sets for monitoring be considered? For example citizen science, the national phenological network, U.S. Forest Service tree atlas and the NASA mega-transect. Also, quite a few studies are showing that species are experiencing Southern range contraction, but not Northern range expansion so refinement of the tool in the long term can be greatly enhanced by some of the freely accessible data sets already out there. Andrew agreed that monitoring can be used to validate species-habitat models and that linking monitoring to model development, validation and evolution needs to be brought into the suite of things that the LCC does. Anne Kuhn asked if the work on regional connectivity being done by Mark Anderson at The Nature Conservancy will be included in this project as well. Andrew answered that the local connectivity used by TNC came from UMass so there's already a convergence of these approaches. Ken pointed out that these last few questions are very important because the products that the RCN process has created- maps and connectivity models- will be brought together with this project to predict what current and future landscapes might look like.

**Presentation and Decision on Recommended Science Needs for FY 2012**

Link to power point: [Science Needs](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/With%20Handout%2012%202012%20Highest%20Priority%20Science%20Needs.pptx)

Scott Schwenk began his overview of the needs that came out of the technical committee meeting noting that a common theme that came out was focusing on foundational science needs that would be important to multiple science partners, states and partnerships. The way the process worked was that each of the three sub teams came up with four or five high priority science needs that were winnowed down from a much larger number based on the LCC Strategic Plan and criteria. The group as a whole then got back together to look at all the needs and pick the top ones from those. Scott skipped over Designing Sustainable Landscapes phase II since it has been discussed already.

* The second priority addresses foundational needs related to coastal and aquatic species-habitat through three components. The first part is to revise the northeast aquatic habitat classification system by adjusting thresholds and bringing some coastal and tidal influences into that system. The second component is to complete the representative species process for aquatic species. The third (and largest) component is to synthesize existing information to identify and map where coastal and aquatic species (including migratory fish species that occur on the coast and in headwaters) occur and how they relate to habitats.
* The third high priority need is to continue mapping coastal habitats across the North Atlantic. Andrew explained that the focus is on the need for a good, consistent, regional, high resolution, intertidal map that would complement the terrestrial map. This is important when it comes to thinking about sea level rise and would include, compiled in one place, habitat maps along with the status of elevation data throughout our region and infrastructure mapping. Ellen Mecray pointed out that there are quite a few groups already invested in researching this sort of thing and that the technical committee should look into that. Andrew agreed and said it may be something that involves minimal effort after seeing what others have already done.
* The fourth high priority need is to work on consistent land cover and stream mapping across the U.S. Canada border throughout the North Atlantic LCC portion of Canada. This is a project that could really catalyze the LCC's interactions with the Canadian partners. Andrew said that this is a very good leveraging opportunity because The Nature Conservancy and Nature Conservancy Canada have started working with some grant funding to do the stream and habitat mapping.
* The fifth high priority need on coastal wetland restoration methodologies that account for climate adaptation. Amanda Babson (National Park Service) described the project by saying that the idea behind this need is to develop guidelines or best practices for certain salt marsh restoration techniques, by working with a partner that has a restoration project that is already planned and funded and add a framework around that so you'll be able to see how it successful it will be in terms of climate adaptation, building resilience and what it can add in terms of a monitoring component.

Ken thanked Amanda for her comments and said there were a few things he wanted to highlight from the synopsis of needs that the technical committee brought forward. The first is that the potential costs listed on handout 12a are just that, potential costs only. In terms of the amount of funding this group has available it's about $1.1 million which would cover the top five science needs in terms of potential costs. Ken asked the group if there are other needs below the top five that they would like to know more about and if not, they could act on those five now. Phil Huffman moved to endorse the first five and Jad Daley (Trust for Public Land) seconded the motion.

Ken asked if there is any discussion that needs to be had before the votes are cast on this slate of needs. There was a question about the funding for the second phase of DSL and what will come out of the first year of funding and what products the LCC won't get if the second year isn't funded. Andrew answered that phase II is a two-year project and that there will be some interim products after the first year, but it's not designed to produce products after the first year. What is really being asked for today is commitment of the first year's funding with the understanding that, depending on funding availability and satisfactory progress after year one, year two will also be funded. A process will have to be put in place to measure satisfactory progress for year one. Secondly, there is a real opportunity for the Climate Science Center to invest in the second year of this project and bring the cost down, specifically some of the computer costs that are associated with it. Mike Rasser said that this reminds him of what David Hayes said at the National LCC conference about not doing too much. There are a lot of projects here and even they have small dollar amounts, the LCC needs to make sure that the products are useful and that they get translated for the users. It does cost money to translate products for users. He asked what the product will be for the wetland restoration project? Amanda answered that what the technical committee discussed was both a report as well as best management practices for restoration techniques for other projects to use. Ken mentioned that one thing this group always looks at with projects is to have the contractors integrate interactions with users and staff into their process. Steve said that the group may have already exceeded the critical mass of projects in terms of projects management - it gets very complicated to manage all these projects and the group needs to recognize that with each project that is taken on there is a project management cost that needs to be within the operational capacity of the LCC, not the contractor. Ken agreed and said that this is an area where the technical team will help out and a project oversight committee will have to be created for each project. Andrew said he wanted to address Mike's comment and that what the group has in front of them now is only science needs. Eventually they will have full project description and proposals and at that point it will be critical that all questions get answered. Andrew also said that if the committee doesn't get a project proposal that fully meets the need, then they can move down the list to the next need. Ken added that we are trying for an endorsement on a way forward, and that the exact proposals will still come before the committee for endorsement. Gwen Brewer asked if it would be a good idea to include more needs given that an acceptable proposal may be come through or that the cost will come in less than this especially given that needs six and seven are cheap. Ken answered that this is certainly a possibility from a process standpoint if she'd like to give the group some guidance. Anne Kuhn said she would like to plug need number eight because it's a foundational, multi-LCC need to develop consensus on a standardized monitoring effort for aquatic systems and to build this database. It's really important for all conservation groups to agree on a method for this and this need would not only create a useful product, but it would also validate science need number two. Ken agreed saying that this list of eleven came from a much larger list, so they're all important. However, part of the question is not only how much money the group has but how much can taken on while still be effective. The group needs to be aware of their capacity to do good work. Patty agreed and reminded everyone of what was said earlier about keeping it doable. In light of what's been said about the capacity of the LCC, Patty would be reluctant to add more. Scot Williamson said that to a certain extent in the top five and definitely in needs six through eleven there is some significant overlap in what RCN will be advertising in their RFP for 2012 so it may be wise to put a placeholder so that when the RCN topics are defined, there will be a lot of integration with this list. Ken said that Scot made a good point and that in a conversation he had with the Northeast Regional Directors they talked about how complementary the RCN is to the LCC processes as long as there is good communication to avoid redundancy. Ken told the group that the motion to take on needs one through five is still on the floor and reminded them that as more information comes in about cost, etc. the group can always change things. They're not locked into an annual cycle. Andrew reminded the group that last year they approved projects in August on a call and again in November so this is just to get the ball rolling. Ken then called a vote on the motion. The top five science needs/projects were accepted unanimously. The RFP for several of the projects will be distributed to Steering Committee members for further distribution.

**Landscape Conservation Design and the Role of LCC in providing Regional Information and Synthesis for State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Updates**

Link to presentation: [Role of LCC in SWAPs](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/NELCD_SWAP%20steering%20committee.pptx)

Steve Fuller began by saying how important it is to have cooperation between the states and the LCCs to create regional wildlife action plan components. Steve then asked Patty Riexinger to say a little bit about this effort. Patty started by saying how excited she is about this two-part project. The SWAPs are due for a revision no later than 2015 according to statutory guideline and a lot of them are looking at way to incorporate climate change. Across the northeast, there are 13 very different SWAPs- each state had different criteria for species of greatest conservation need, they called habitats different things etc- so it was virtually impossible to roll those up to look at needs across the region. In trying to find a way to stitch these plans together, the habitat classification system was really instrumental in realizing that a set of common habitat terms was really necessary. So a two-part solution was devised in March at a meeting of the SWAP planners. The first part is to create a database to roll up information and agree upon common terminology and the other was to take all the regional projects that have been done with the LCCs and RCNs and put them together in a way that states can use. This will be a good way to deliver on all the things the RCNs and LCCs have done. Steve talked about the meeting that was held with some state and LCC folks the previous day. This project will happen in roughly three phases. The first phase consists of compiling and organizing all the information from completed and ongoing regional projects and databases. The second and third phases involve synthesis and spatial analysis. To be effective the LCC needs to initiate data sharing initiatives with NatureServe, USDA and other key partners. Patty pointed out that the database development will be combined with TRACS - the new federal reporting system to show how Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration funds are spent and provide accountability for Congress. Pete Murdoch asked Steve if he's had any conversations with other LCCs yet. Steve answered that are looking at what is already being done here in the Northeast. Andrew said that since there are three other LCCs in the Northeast region they should be involved. Jean Brennan asked how data will be managed. Steve answered that that’s a bigger question than this project but a critically important. Cathy Sparks about the timeline as some states are already in the process of updating their SWAPs and it’s important that if this is supported than the states need to know. Steve answered that the goal is to have the first iteration of this project complete by next April. Cathy recommended that once there's a little more information and certainty, it goes out to the states. Patty pointed out that an important element will be coordination with the states so they know early and often to make progress. One other thing Patty wanted to point out is that this list of species did not include marine species and this database will have marine information in it. While looking to next year’s NEAFWA meeting, this could be added to a session like the tutorial discussed earlier that Andrew could give on Designing Sustainable Landscapes. Karen Bennett pointed out that this is a project concept that came from the states and she doesn’t want that to get lost in the sense that the LCC is presenting it here. On the marine side, this group did not specifically pull marine species out, but did include marine mammals, marine reptiles and birds and they did discuss it. The problem is that in the first iterations of WAP, marine species were not included and all that this group can hope for is that they're going to be included in the next iterations but the states can't be forced to include these things in their plans. Jad Daley said he wanted to make a quick comment of the issue of coordinating with adjacent LCCs and it's not a perfectly analogous design but the South Atlantic LCC is working on an LCC conservation design and it seems like it would be worthwhile to find out where these two things dovetail, especially where the LCCs are adjacent. Andrew added as a quick follow up to Jad's comment that the DSL project has it's root in the South Atlantic LCC through the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture so there's already a common project background that this group could build off of.

**Proposed Demonstration Projects**

Jad Daley began by telling everyone how excited he is about these projects and this process. There was an ad hoc committee that was charged with two things. The first was defining what this group really means by the term demonstration project and the second was developing criteria for evaluating potential demonstration projects. One of the important things that came out of that is that demonstration projects are really about translating LCC science projects into action. One of the challenges the committee ran into was that they were all thinking at three different scales: the town/municipality scale, the landscape within the larger LCC landscape scale and last the LCC scale. What can be seen in the memorandum as well as in the three projects that were described is an effort to show how demonstration projects can operate at those three scales. There was one other thing the ad hoc committee was charged with which was inventing and using a process that is replicable, transparent and can later be synced up with the annual science needs process. The first project that Jad discussed was at the highest LCC scale (link to presentation: [Prioritizing Conservation](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/With%20Handout%2010%20-Prioritizing%20Conservation%20Opportunites%20NALCC%20demo%20project%20slide.Final.pptx)). The goal of this first project “Utilizing Science to Amplify Priority Conservation Opportunity in the Appalachian Forest” is to take some of the information from other projects and use it to organize partners around key focus areas that are particular hot spots for connectivity or species and become a galvanizing force. The second proposal is at the landscape within a landscape scale and what it plans to do is take LCC science products and turn them into a parcel level conservation plan as well as make an online application that will make this information accessible to others (link to presentation: [Boundary Mountains](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/With%20Handout%2014%20NALCC%20Demonstration%20Project.Boundary%20Mountains.ppt)). The third project goes all the way down to the most local scale and it's an effort to take large scale information and North Atlantic LCC partner science products on salt marsh migration and translate it down to the municipal scale (link to presentation: [Marsh Migration](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/With%20Handout%2014%20NALCC%20Demonstration%20Project%20Marsh%20Migration.ppt)). This will make it so state agencies and other partners can engage with municipalities to help them understand what this information means for their jurisdiction and to work with them to develop a conservation strategy that reflects what the science is saying about future challenges related to salt marsh migration.

Tom O’Shea (Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife) asked if there are any plans within the first project to work with private landowners. Jad answered that quite a few groups that are working on that project are local landowner groups and the committee is hoping that will be the group most informed by the information from this project. Ellen Mecray asked if the committee has already identified existing partners that are already doing this work on the second and third projects. Steve Walker (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife) answered that they are working with Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve and Great Bay National Research Reserve using the same science and modeling techniques and moving forward with collaboratively with them on marsh migration. Ellen mentioned three people she knows that have done extensive research on marsh migration and they are Scott Nixon from the University of Rhode Island, Don Cahoun from U.S.G.S, and Susan Bricker from NOAA. George Gay said that the goals of that project are to coalesce and amplify existing work in the footprint of that project and that would include efforts by the Staying Connected Initiative, the Wildlands Network and the Wildlands and Woodlands network. Ellen then asked about the Appalachian Trail project and whether they have any involvement with the big, funded study with NASA. George answered that the Appalachian Trail Conservancy is connected with that study and is very much engaged in this project. Steve Fuller asked if the project is directly linked to Appalachian Trail corridor and George answered that it's not but it does allow the LCC to connect with conservation groups within that feature on the landscape.

Ken stepped in to give a few bits on information to clarify what the group will be doing with this. There are two reasons why this on the agenda today and the first is because there have been several meetings where the role of the LCC in demonstration projects has been discussed because one of things this group needs to figure out is what can be learned about what needs to go on the ground and how can that inform the creation of science and tools. The second part is that there is a request for funds to carry these projects forward. The group needs to discuss whether or not to support this kind of work and if it's a good representation of the scale that the LCC needs to work at and whether it can be paid for. There is enough money left in the budget after the endorsement of the five projects earlier to cover to RFP for these projects. Becky Gwynn asked the question of how will the information gained from these projects actually be translated so they can used in other areas, not just within this LCC. Jad answered that for the project his group is backing in particular, they want to make a replicable system that can be used in other areas and they've also dedicated part of the budget to stakeholder meeting where anyone interested will be welcome. It won't be restricted to people within the area so that they can learn how LCC products were integrated and what sorts of challenges they experienced. Jean Brennan asked if building the capacity for deployment of these projects is something that can be built in. Jad answered that, yes “training the trainers” would definitely be part of it. Ken asked the group what they would like to do with this slate of projects. Steve said that he would like to see full proposals. He said he thinks things are moving in the right direction but he would like to see them evolve a little more and also for the smaller ones, to see them expand in scope a bit. Both Ellen and Dave Day (Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission) seconded Steve's comments. Mike Rasser seconded the idea as well saying he would like to better understand what methods will be used because $20,000 doesn't seem like enough to hold stakeholder meetings as well as develop an online mapping tool. Jad said that in the handouts for his presentation there is information on matching funding already committed and he forgot to mention that. For example, his group has $140,000 already committed and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has something like $1.2 million already committed. Ken offered a way forward on this that entailed giving tentative funding and having the organizers go back and create a more detailed proposal that addresses the issues that came up in the discussion. Ken said he would entertain a motion to put a placeholder on the $60,000 request for funds with the group knowing that that they would endorse this if they were satisfied with the full proposals that are brought back. Anne Kuhn made a motion and Becky Gywnn seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Role of LCC in Delivering National Fish, Wildlife and Plant Adaptation Strategy and Wildlife Habitat System for the Nation**

Patty Riexinger started out by saying that the National Fish, Wildlife and Plant Adaptation Strategy is still just a draft document. The idea to use the LCCs as a primary vehicle to implement many of these strategies has been brought up quite a bit. There's a great opportunity for the LCC to implement some of these strategies, the group just needs to decide what role they want to take and for today this just needs to be kept on the table. Patty said that the next step for the national strategy is that of implementation and the national team is not really sure how to go about it. This is where the LCCs could really be leaders. Jeff Horan asked to what extent this plan will be implemented into the plan for the CSCs. Patty answered that the strategy was developed to be a blueprint that anyone can use. She assumes the CSCs will keep these up and offer their help to deliver on strategies. Andrew described the Wildlife Habitat System for the Nation as another opportunity to have LCCs working together on similar approaches for identifying priority areas in the face of landscape change including climate change. Ken said that the vision for these plans and the vision of the LCC interface pretty closely so it's important to keep working with them. Andrew pointed out that there isn't really an action item due on this, it's just here to make people aware that these national things are happening and for the people trying to implement it, they may want to model it after the North Atlantic LCC and NEAFWA in the Northeast and not try to create anything new or duplicative.

**Options for Developing Conservation Targets**

Ken led a discussion on conservation targets. The group at the Albany II meeting developed a northeast conservation framework that included identification of conservation targets including representative species. These are individual species that represent a suite of other species or habitats for conservation planning. One of the questions that needs to get answered is how do you create a landscape that protects multiple species while taking into account future changes and current conditions. It's also important to know how much and where species or habitat needs to be and how you're going to get to that point. He requested that the LCC form a subcommittee to address conservation targets initially compiling a list of existing population targets for representative species and deciding whether they are adequate or need further development. Scot Williamson said he's very sensitive to the fact that the LCC can compile and organize but there are going to be targets that are going to conflict with each other and have varying levels of supporting information. He would be hesitant to set new targets giving the impression that the LCC is setting targets on its own authority. Ken said he understands where Scot is coming from but the hope is that states will share their information and help keep the LCC on the right track. The LCC doesn't need to design ways to resolve these conflicts but more design tools to help states and other partners resolve their conflicts. Ken asked Scot if that helped and Scot said that Ken expressed, very well, the correct position of the LCC so that it stays true to its mission. Mike Rasser asked if this is limited to wildlife only or will plants be included. Ken said he chose to narrow it down to wildlife but it can really be anything based on what needs to be achieved. One conservation target that he knows the LCC is lacking in is cultural resources. Patty asked if this will be piloted with the representative species project. Ken said he thinks that is exactly the best place to start.

Zoe Smith asked why the LCC needs these targets. Thinking back to the earlier presentation about the risks of climate change and habitat shifts, it would seem more practical to create a functional habitat that would be used rather than a certain number of species. Ken said the view of an ecosystem and functionality are sometimes best represented by the way species use it so the goal of setting targets is not a goal of representation but seeing how much is enough. John O'Leary (Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife) said that NRCS has a great approach on this issue and that is that they use a process that shows how when they buy certain plots of land they'll get a certain return. He said this seems like a much more reasonable way to do this. Ken said that while that is an option, society has an expectation of sustaining wildlife populations.

Anne Kuhn suggested adding in some kind of feedback, possibly an adaptive management loop to prioritize conservation. Ken agreed saying that's such a huge part of the implementation process. Phil Huffman said that there are many different institutions with different goals and ways to define conservation targets. It's clear that the Service and other state agencies have a responsibility to focus on a species-based approach and that creates a clear logic for going forward with this. However, we need to keep in mind the other ways to view the world when doing things this way and create a crosscheck with the other measures of conservation success. Ken said that's a very good point and it is this groups responsibility to come up with what the shared responsibilities are to individual organizations, etc and build them into the landscape this group is trying to design. Patty said how this conversation has strengthened her resolve to taking a representative species approach because it really links back to some of the initiatives of designing a sustainable landscape and in regards to Zoe's earlier comment, these species can also be used to define habitat associated with them and then not only will numbers of species need be looked at but also how much of a specific habitat is needed. The species are what people get excited about and what they like to see. They understand it better than if you tell them you're trying to conserve mixed hardwood forests and it has good public appeal in terms of getting people to back it. Steve Fuller added that there's one other variable to think about other than species and habitat and that is the level of tolerance the public has for conserving certain amounts of land. Wayne MacCallum said he's having an issue with setting a population goal that sounds good but may not realistically be possible but population trends are something that could be realistically monitored. Wayne also pointed out that one method of conserving one species may harm another at the same time. One other issue to think about is that if LCC-wide population goals are set, there may be species that end with population numbers that are much too high because other factors aren't being taken into account. Ken agreed with what Wayne said and pointed out that a nexus between management goals and societal goals is really important. Ken asked for a motion to solicit volunteers for a conservation targets subcommittee. Patty moves and the motion is seconded. Ken puts the motion to a vote and it passes unanimously.

**Information Management Needs Assessment**

Link to presentation: [AppGeo](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/NALCC_SteeringComm_WV.pptx)

BJ Richardson (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) introduced Michael Terner (Applied Geographics) and give a little background on the information management needs assessment. BJ said it will be about three months for the project to be completed and that today, he's looking for the group's support on this project. Michael talked about strategic planning which is basically knowing what is needed and then figuring out how to get it. AppGeo is here to hear what the group needs then generate some ideas to help. The first part will be an online survey, Michael just needs feedback about what audience the group is trying to reach by that. The second part will be in-person and phone interviews. Finally, Michael will discuss options for information management with the group after all the data has been collected. Andrew thanked Michael for coming and voiced his concern that there is so much information out there that's not being used and they need to understand what the barriers are and how to overcome them. BJ said how he was very excited coming out of this meeting since some of the needs have already been discussed and it's given the group a really good jump start on the assessment. He reminded the group that there will be a second stage of implementing the recommendations that come out of this assessment process. There was a question about how this was being coordinated nationally. BJ answered that there is a data management working group that is coordinating among LCCs. There was a point made that some people taking a survey may not know what they need and Michael said the survey will cover the “known“ things and the one-on-one sessions will help address options that partners may not know about.

**Other Business**

The timing of the next face-to-face meeting was discussed. The next Northeast Directors meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 1 in the Catskills area of New York. That would mean that the LCC Steering Committee would meet the day before on October 31. There were concerns expressed about meeting on Halloween but the recognition of the importance of tying the LCC meeting to the Northeast Director’s meeting.

Patty asked for updates on the communications portion of the agenda that we did not have time to cover. Megan Nagel (North Atlantic LCC) answered that there is a powerpoint (link: [Summary of existing and proposed communications products](http://northatlanticlcc.org/powerpoints/041812/Handout%2018%20Communications%20Update.pptx)) online but that she would also schedule and update with people because there are some really important things that need to be discussed in terms of new products and audiences. Andrew mentioned the idea of a webinar on communications. Mike Rasser asked what the timeline was for the full proposals for the demonstration project folks. Ken answered that it could be on the July/August conference call or sooner, it just depends on how much the team needs to get things done but he will be in touch. Ellen Mecray asked who Michael Terner will be doing the interviews with and Ken answered that there will be an e-mail with more information on that. Ken thanked everyone for their time and their input on this and their focus on moving the group forward in a good direction.

**The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.**

Attendance

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| **Name** | **Agency** |
| Ken Elowe | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Andrew Milliken | North Atlantic LCC |
| Megan Nagel | North Atlantic LCC |
| Scott Schwenk | North Atlantic LCC |
| Lora Mathers | North Atlantic LCC |
| Steve Fuller | North Atlantic LCC |
| Sherry Morgan | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Becky Gwynn | Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries |
| Steve Walker | Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife |
| Pete Murdoch | U.S. Geological Survey |
| Jean Brennan | Appalachian LCC |
| Bill Hyatt | Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection |
| Anne Kuhn | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| Zoe Smith | Wildlife Conservation Society |
| Jeff Horan | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Maryland Department of Natural Resources |
| Tai-ming Chang | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| Mike Rasser | Bureau of Ocean Energy Management |
| BJ Richardson | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Gwen Brewer | Maryland Department of Natural Resources |
| Karen Bennett | Delaware Department of Environmental Conservation |
| Bernie Marczyk | Ducks Unlimited |
| Patricia Riexinger | New York State Department of Environmental Conservation |
| Paul Johansen | West Virginia Department of Natural Resources |
| Wendi Weber | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Cathy Sparks | Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management |
| Phil Huffman | The Nature Conservancy |
| Amanda Babson | National Park Service |
| Scot Williamson | Wildlife Management Institute |
| Rick Bennett | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| George Gay | National Wildlife Federation |
| John O’Leary | Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife |
| Wayne MacCallum | Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife |
| Tom O’Shea | Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife |
| Michael Terner | Applied Geographics |
| Dave Harto | Whitetail Management Coalition |
| Beth Whitley | The Nature Conservancy |
| Dee Blanton | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Jad Daley | Trust for Public Land |
| **On phone** |  |
| Doug Bliss | Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service |
| Ben Thatcher | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Dave Day | Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Comission |
| Ellen Mecray | NOAA |